William Butler Yeats (1865 - 1939)

Born in 1865 in Dublin, W. B. Yeats is considered as one of the greatest writers of the twentieth century. Although he spent his childhood in London, Yeats' poems reflect his deep emotional attachment to his native land, Ireland. Being a staunch supporter of Irish nationalism, he devoted himself to native subjects - writing poems, plays, short stories and novels with Irish characters and setting. Many of his writings reveal a dreamlike nostalgia. He was a modernist who experimented with free verse and a symbolist who used allusive images and symbols throughout his career. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1923.

In the poem ‘The Wild Swans at Coole’, Yeats laments the loss of his youth.

The Wild Swans at Coole

THE TREES are in their autumn beauty,
The woodland paths are dry,
Under the October twilight, the water
Mirrors a still sky;
Upon the brimming water among the stones
Are nine and fifty swans.

The nineteenth Autumn has come upon me
Since I first made my count;
I saw, before I had well finished,

1. What does the poet mean by 'autumn beauty'?
2. How does the poet describe the autumn scene?
3. How is 'nineteen years' connected with the swans?

Coole : a national park near Dublin in Ireland
The Wild Swans at Coole

4. What did the swans do suddenly?

5. What change has come over the poet now?

6. Pick out two words that denote the movement of the swans.

7. What remains with the swans wherever they go?

8. List some of the adjectives used by the poet to describe the swans.

All suddenly mount
And scatter wheeling in great broken rings
Upon their clamorous wings.

I have looked upon those brilliant creatures.
And now my heart is sore.
All’s changed since I, hearing at twilight.
The first time on this shore,
The bell-beat of their wings above my head.
Trod with a lighter tread.

Unwearied still, lover by lover,
They paddle in the cold.
Companionable streams or climb the air;
Their hearts have not grown old;
Passion or conquest, wander where they will.
Attend upon them still.

But now they drift on the still water
Mysterious, beautiful;
Among what rushes will they build.
By what lake’s edge or pool
Delight men’s eyes, when I awake some day
To find they have flown away?

**clamorous**: noisy

**mount**: to get upon

**paddle**: to swim with short movements

**sore**: grieving

**trod**: walked heavily or laboriously

**wheeling**: moving in large circles

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**Understanding the Text**

1. In the first stanza, the poet expresses his delight at the sight of the swans. Does he remain happy throughout the poem? Why does the mood of the poet change?

2. Yeats says that everything has changed at Coole Park. What do you think he is talking about - the scenery or his own life?

3. The poet visits Coole Park in autumn and at twilight. Does this give any clue about the theme of the poem? What is its significance?

4. The paths in the wood are dry. Can you attribute any deeper meaning to the word ‘dry’?

5. The poet says that the swans took off suddenly as he was counting them. Yet he says that there are fifty nine swans. How does he know that? What may be the intention of the poet in choosing fifty nine as the number of swans?

6. What do the swans symbolise?

7. The poet creates a poignant and calm atmosphere in the poem. How does it support the theme of the poem?
8. What is the prevailing tone in the poem? You may notice an interplay of varying tones at different places. Pick out lines which reflect the following tones.

a. calm/serene : ..............................................

b. full of admiration : ..............................................

c. regretful : ..............................................

9. In the poem, the poet contrasts the ‘dry paths’ with the ‘brimming lakes’. What other things are contrasted in the poem?

10. How does the last stanza contribute to the theme of the poem?

11. The poem contains a beautiful imagery of nature. It also contains images of the poet’s ageing self. List down these images.

12. Identify and explain the figure of speech used in lines 3 and 4.

13. In stanza 4, the poet makes ‘passion’ and ‘conquest’ to attend the swans. Identify the figure of speech employed here.

14. A synecdoche is a literary device that uses a part of something to refer to the whole. (For example, ‘wheels’ can refer to a car.) Pick out lines from the third stanza in which this figure of speech is used.

15. Find out the lines which are examples for ‘alliteration’, ‘assonance’ and ‘consonance’ from the poem.

16. What is the rhyme scheme of the poem?

**Writing about the Text**

1. Write an essay on the theme, language and literary devices of the poem.

2. Describe the reflections of the poet at the sight of the swans.

3. The Wild Swans at Coole’ portrays the regret and sentiments of a man on the verge of old age. Do you agree? Substantiate.

Here is a poem written by D. H. Lawrence.

**Beautiful Old Age**

It ought to be lovely to be old
to be full of the peace that comes of experience
and wrinkled ripe fulfilment.
The Wild Swans at Coole

The wrinkled smile of completeness that follows a life
lived undaunted and unsoured with accepted lies
they would ripen like apples, and be scented like pippins
in their old age.

Soothing, old people should be, like apples
when one is tired of love.
Fragrant like yellowing leaves, and dim with the soft
stillness and satisfaction of autumn.
And a girl should say:

It must be wonderful to live and grow old.
Look at my mother, how rich and still she is! -
And a young man should think: By Jove
my father has faced all weathers, but it's been a life!

Attempt a comparative study of the attitudes of D. H. Lawrence and W. B. Yeats
towards old age.

References

Wystan Hugh Auden (1907–1973)

W. H. Auden was an Anglo-American poet, who is regarded as one of the greatest writers of the 20th century. His work is noted for its stylistic and technical achievement. The central themes of his poetry are love, politics and citizenship, religion and morals, intricate human relationships and the anonymous, impersonal world of nature. He was also a prolific writer of essays and reviews on literary, psychological and religious subjects and he worked on documentary films, poetic plays and other forms of performance.

The poem ‘The Unknown Citizen’ is a satire on modern society where an individual is reduced to a numerical factor.

The Unknown Citizen

(To JS/07 M 378)
This Marble Monument
Is Erected by the State)
He was found by the Bureau of Statistics to be
One against whom there was no official complaint,
And all the reports on his conduct agree
That, in the modern sense of an old-fashioned word, he was a saint.
For in everything he did he served the Greater Community.
Except for the War till the day he retired
He worked in a factory and never got fired.
But satisfied his employers, Fudge Motors Inc.
Yet he wasn’t a scab or odd in his views.

1. Why does the poet remark that ‘he was a saint’?
For his Union reports that he paid his dues,
(Our report on his Union shows it was sound)

And our Social Psychology workers found
That he was popular with his mates and liked a drink.
The Press are convinced that he bought a paper every day
And that his reactions to advertisements were normal in every way.
Policies taken out in his name prove that he was fully insured.
And his Health-card shows he was once in hospital but left it cured.
Both Producers Research and High-Grade Living declare
He was fully sensible to the advantages of the Instalment Plan
And had everything necessary to the Modern Man.
A phonograph, a radio, a car and a frigidaire.

Our researchers into Public Opinion are content
That he held the proper opinions for the time of year;
When there was peace, he was for peace; when there was war, he went.

He was married and added five children to the population.
Which our Eugenist says was the right number for a parent of his generation.
And our teachers report that he never interfered with their education.

Was he free? Was he happy? The question is absurd.
Had anything been wrong, we should certainly have heard.

2. How do we know that his employer and the trade union were satisfied?

3. What was the conviction the Press had about the unknown citizen?

4. Why does the poet say that the unknown citizen had everything necessary for the Modern Man?

5. Which lines indicate that he was an opportunist?

6. Why are the questions posed in the poem 'absurd'?
The Unknown Citizen

**Eugenist**: a specialist who tries to improve the human race by encouraging reproduction by persons having desirable traits

**frigidaire**: a brand of electric refrigerator

**scab**: a worker who refuses to join a strike

Understanding the Text

1. The epitaph gives the dead person the identity of a code number. What does it imply?

2. Who is the speaker in the poem? Is he/she a single person? Does he/she symbolise anything more? Discuss.

3. The poet lists many accomplishments by the unknown citizen. But they are all phrased in the negative sense. Comment.

4. Does the unknown citizen's passivity mean that he was really happy and content? Explain.

5. Though the dead man is called an unknown citizen, he had been thoroughly investigated by different agencies of the State. Could this be a prophetic warning about the future of modern man? Elucidate.

6. What is the message of the poem?

7. Identify and discuss the rhyme scheme of the poem.

8. Some critics consider the poem as a satirical elegy. Does the treatment of the theme, tone and diction support this view? Elaborate.

9. The poem is considered as an allegory. Justify this statement.

Writing about the Text

1. Though the poem was written in 1930, the theme of the poem is relevant even today. Substantiate.

2. Consider ‘The Unknown Citizen’ as a satire on a modern welfare state, where a human being is reduced to a numerical factor.

3. ‘The Unknown Citizen’ is a typical modern poem. Comment.

References


James Falconer Kirkup (1918 - 2009)

James Kirkup (1918 - 2009) was a prolific English poet, translator and travel writer. He wrote over thirty books, including his autobiography, novels and plays. He became a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature in 1962. His collection of poems include *Refusal to Conform, A Correct Compassion* etc. His works offer a different perspective on modern life, its brutality and ruggedness. He won many awards like: *The Atlantic Award for Literature* in 1950, *P.E.N. Club Prize for Poetry* in 1965 and *The Japan Festival Foundation Award* in 1997.

The poem is an outright plea to realise the level of devastation that war causes and it strives to conjure up anti-war emotions in the reader.

**No More Hiroshimas**

At the station exit, my bundle in my hand,
Early the winter afternoon’s wet snow
Falls thinly round me, out of a cruddled sun
I had forgotten to remember where I was
Looking about, I see it might be anywhere-
A station, a town like any other in Japan.
Ramshackle, muddy, noisy, drab, a cheerfully
Shallow permanence, peeling concrete, litter, ‘Atomic
Lotion, for hair fall-out, a flimsy department-store
Racks and towers of neon, flashy over tiled and tilted waves
Of little roofs, shacks cascading lemons and persimmons,
Oranges and dark-red apples, shanties awash with rainbows

1. Comment on the time, place and climate of the setting from the opening lines.

2. What are the things that the poet sees in the department store?
Of squid and octopus, shellfish, slabs of tuna, oysters, ice.

Ablaze with fans of soiled nude-picture books
Thumbed abstractedly by schoolboys, with second-hand looks

3. Which line tells us that the town of Hiroshima does not want to move forward in time?

The river remains unchanged, sad, refusing rehabilitation
In this long, wide, empty, official boulevard
The new trees are still small, the office blocks
Barely functional, the bridge a slick abstraction
But the river remains unchanged, sad, refusing rehabilitation

4. Why does the poet say 'a kind of life goes on'?
In the city centre, far from the station’s lively squalor
A kind of life goes on, in cinemas and hi-fi coffee bars,
In the shuffling racket of pin-table palaces and parlours.
The souvenir-shops piled with junk, kimonoed kewpie-dolls.
Models of the bombed Industry Promotion Hall, memorial ruin
Tricked out with glitter-frost and artificial pearls

Set in an awful emptiness, the modern tourist hotel is trimmed
With jaded Christmas frippery, flatulent balloons; in the hall.
A giant dingy iced cake in the shape of a Cinderella coach
Deserted, my room an overheated morgue, the bar in darkness
Punctually, the electric chimes ring out across the tidy waste
Their doleful public hymn – the tune unrecognizable, evangelist
Here atomic peace is geared to meet the tourist trade
Let it remain like this, for all the world to see
Without nobility or loveliness, and dogged with shame
That is beyond all hope of indignation. Anger, too, is dead
And why should memorials of what was far
From pleasant have the grace that helps us to forget?
No More Hiroshimas

In the dying afternoon, I wander dying round the Park of Peace
It is right, this squat, dead place, with its left-over air
Of an abandoned International Trade and Tourist Fair
The stunted trees are wrapped in straw against the cold
The gardeners are old, old women in blue bloomers, white aprons
Survivors weeding the dead brown lawns around the Children’s Monument

A hideous pile, the Atomic Bomb Explosion Centre, freezing cold,
‘Includes the peace Tower, a museum containing
Atomic-melted slates and bricks, photos showing
What the Atomic Desert looked like, and other
Relics of the catastrophe
The other relics
The ones that made me weep;
The bits of burnt clothing
The stopped watches, the torn shirts
The twisted buttons
The stained and tattered vests and drawers
The ripped kimonos and charred boots
The white blouse polka-dotted with atomic rain, indelible
The cotton summer pants the blasted boys crawled home in, to bleed
And slowly to die

Remember only these
They are the memorials we need.

8. What are the relics of the catastrophe presented in the poem?

9. ‘Remember only these. They are the memorials we need.’ Why does the poet say so?
No More Hiroshimas

Park of Peace: Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park is a park in Hiroshima dedicated to the legacy of Hiroshima as the first city to suffer a nuclear attack.

bloomers: a woman's dress, long loose trousers gathered at the ankles

indignation: a feeling of anger and surprise

junk: discarded articles; here, articles of less value

kewpie dolls: a trademark for small chubby dolls with a top-knot of hair

morgue: a place where dead bodies are kept before burial

persimmons: a tropical fruit like an orange

pin table: a game equipment on which pin-ball is played

ramshackle: in a very bad condition

sick: a woman's dress, long loose trousers gathered at the ankles

squalor: dirty condition

trim: to decorate

Understanding the Text

1. Consider Hiroshima as a symbol. What is the significance of the title?

2. A 'paradox' is a self-contradictory statement which is difficult to believe, or which goes against the generally accepted opinion. Find out the paradox in the first stanza. How far does it emphasise the message of the poem?

3. Identify the adjectives and metaphors in the first stanza. What do they imply?

4. What is the tone of the first stanza and how does it contrast with the other stanzas of the poem?

5. In which stanza does the tone of the poem change? What is the significance of the change in the tone of the poem?

6. Why does the poet repeat the line 'the river remains unchanged, sad, refusing rehabilitation'?

7. Identify the figures of speech used in the second stanza.

8. What is the poetic device used in the third stanza? What is its purpose?
9. Pick out words associated with emptiness in the first four stanzas. What effect does the imagery have?

10. How does the poet's comment on what he has found in Hiroshima explain the negative imagery of the first four stanzas? Discuss.

11. How often does the poet repeat the idea of death while describing the 'Park of Peace'? What is the significance of this repetition?

12. There is a reference to the items found in the museum. What are they? What do they signify?

13. 'Lively squallor' is an oxymoron used to create greater poetic effect. Pick out other examples of oxymoron in the poem.

14. Does the poem have any regular rhyme scheme or rhythm? Why?

15. 'Here, atomic peace is geared to meet the tourist trade.' Why does the poet say so?

Writing about the Text

1. The first stanza of the poem presents a vivid picture of a station in Hiroshima. Does the picture serve as a preface to the rest of the poem? Explain.

2. Trace the change in the attitude of the poet as the poem progresses.

3. What is the general tone of the poem?

4. What message does the poem put across?

5. Does the poem stir anti-war emotions in the reader? Prepare the script of a speech on the topic 'The Need to Abandon Wars in Future' in the light of your reading of the poem.

5. Critically evaluate the poem and prepare a review of it.

Now, read the poem given below and answer the questions.

Glory of Women

You love us when we're heroes, home on leave,
Or wounded in a mentionable place
You worship decorations; you believe
That chivalry redeems the war's disgrace
You make us shells. You listen with delight,
No More Hiroshimas

By tales of dirt and danger fondly thrilled.
You crown our distant ardours while we fight,
And mourn our laureled memories when we’re killed.
You can’t believe that British troops retire
When hell’s last horror breaks them, and they run,
Trampling the terrible corpses - blind with blood.
O German mother dreaming by the fire,
While you are knitting socks to send your son
His face is trodden deeper in the mud.

Siegfried Sassoon

1. Who are the ‘you’ and ‘we’ referred to in the poem?
2. How do women romanticise war?
3. The last lines give a powerful ending to the poem with a striking word picture. What is its significance?

Reference

Salwa Bakr (1949-)

A major Egyptian short story writer and novelist, Salwa Bakr rose to fame after the publication of her much acclaimed novel and short stories under the title of Atiya’s Shrine (1986). Though Bakr’s writings are characterised by her Egyptian experience, her deep understanding of the human nature and insightful handling of themes have lent a universal outlook to them.

The story Doves on the Wing presents a theft in a moving bus and showcases the pathetic condition of the Egyptian society and politics.

Doves on the Wing

They carried out their plan very efficiently. The first one, the one with the deep scar on his short neck, boarded the bus at the main terminal. Then, after the bus had made its way through the central shopping area, creeping along like a tortoise because of the masses of cars and people and the merchandise spilling out over the pavements and onto the streets, the second one leapt on the bus the moment it slowed down at the first stop in the old district - where buildings now vied with one another to soar into the sky, stifling the lovely gardens that had slumbered peacefully there such a short time before. The third, sharp-eyed, with a lean, straight body translating itself easily into sudden lithe movements, clung to the bar fixed to the rear door as the bus set off from the stop at the public garden, which separates the old district from the other districts. Every district had its distinct identity, reflected in the street lighting (sometimes faint, most often non-existent), the broken pavements and the regular potholes in the street, to which the bodies of the

1. The story opens with a vivid picture of the streets. List their peculiarities.
   - _____________
   - _____________
   - _____________
   - _____________

2. Identify the humour in Bakr’s description of the pavements and the movement of the passengers inside the bus.
passengers responded by going up and down, or left and right. Whenever the bus landed in one of them or the driver tried to go around them. The moment the third man boarded the bus and made sure his two partners were there too - the first one standing at the front, behind the driver, the second sitting in the last seat at the back - he raised his hand as a signal to go ahead and pushed his way through the standing passengers to the front, upon which the other two produced 'gazelle horn' knives and pointed them at the backs of the driver and conductor. Then the third man whipped out his gun and aimed at the passengers. 'Put your hands up,' he said, 'and don't move.' Stunned, the passengers hesitated for a few seconds, then raised their hands. So did the conductor, in spite of the Belmont cigarette burning between his thumb and forefinger, the one his friend, the street vendor had given him before calling out to sell his wares, then jumping off the bus. The only one whose hands didn't go up was the driver; he clutched the steering wheel and followed the instructions of the leader with the gun, slowing the bus down. This holdup, he thought sadly, could only put back the moment when he got back home and dropped on his bed like a stone, sinking into a sound sleep and getting a little relief from the pain and toil of a long day. No doubt, too, the passengers would insist he change course when the thieves had run off, heading for the nearest police station to file a complaint. He gave an angry grunt. Here was one more reason, he reflected, just one more to add to all the other reasons, for cursing the ill-starred day he was appointed a driver in the Public Transport Department. Meanwhile there were thirty-five of its clients on the bus, six of whom had fallen into a deep sleep after the first stop or two, probably because they lived in the district at the other end of the route; these, for a few minutes at least, were still unconscious of what was going on and so were saved the trouble of putting up their hands. Then the man with the gun yelled at them, frightening them so much they sat up and raised their

3. What did the third man command?

4. Why didn't the driver raise his hands?

5. How were the six passengers saved from the trouble of putting up their hands for a few minutes?
Doves on the Wing

hands like all the other passengers. Even the little boy who'd been sitting on his mother's lap and smiling and gaily putting up his hands because he supposed everyone was playing 'Doves on the Wing' - even he got upset and started crying when his hands stayed up too long, and his mother didn't, as she usually did when they played this game, say 'Put down the dove' and lower her hands into her lap. But the man with the gun glared at him, and the boy buried his face in his mother's bosom. She was tense as well, and had started worrying, not about the one pound five piastres wrapped up in a piece of cloth and hidden between her breasts - she didn't suppose the thieves would be so mean and low as to search the secret places in her bosom - but because they might seize the goose in the basket under her seat, which now kept stretching out its neck and moving it enquiringly from side to side. For the moment, though, the thieves didn't share her concern about the goose, or about all the trouble she'd taken to feed it and fatten it so she could take it to her daughter, a bride of less than a week, whose home she was now going to on this bus, to spend the night and slaughter the goose the next morning. All the thieves were worried about for the moment was collecting the passengers' money just as quickly as they could. The one in the rear started ordering the passengers to get all their money out, and to take their watches off if they had them, and he also told them all, men and women alike, to give up any items of gold jewellery like rings and earrings. The one farmer on the bus, who was not only carrying nineteen pounds thirty piastres in his pocket but had a gold crown in his mouth as well, decided - a true child of our times - to keep his mouth shut tight and quietly hand over everything in his pocket, not letting the smallest grumble escape his lips. In contrast, the young conscript soldier sitting next to him had his mouth wide open, unable to believe this was actually happening on a bus that was supposed to be taking him to the nearest place to his military unit (from which he would still have

6. At the beginning, the little boy was happy. Why?

7. Why did the little boy start crying?

8. What was the mother of the little boy worried about?

9. Where was she going with her son?

10. What did the thief in the rear order?

11. The farmer decided to keep his mouth shut. Why?
to walk at least three kilometers across the desert to reach his destination), the whole thing was like a scene from some American gangster film. It was true he had no more than twenty-five piastres in his pocket, and the thieves, damn them, were more than welcome to it, but he was bitter because he’d saved the provisions his mother had given him rather than eating them all straight off. three boiled eggs, a loaf of homemade bread, onions and a large fig. The thieves, though, passed him by; the one collecting the money didn’t, for some reason, bother to ask the soldier for his money—probably he’d learned from the wise saying, ‘What can the wind gain from bare tiles?’ Not wanting to waste his precious thief’s time, he didn’t even glance at the soldier who (whatever the words of the popular song might say) obviously wasn’t the Pride of the Egyptian Nation, but told the old man in the next seat to produce his wallet and empty the contents. The old man pleaded with him. ‘For the Prophet’s sake,’ he begged, ‘let me keep just five pounds. My daughter Loza needs a pair of shoes to wear to the children’s festival at school tomorrow.’ But the thief told him to keep his mouth shut. The thin black man sitting in the back made a similar request (with three pounds difference in the sum involved); then, when the thief took no notice, he moaned and grumbled and cursed his own stupidity and lack of foresight, because if he’d stayed in the cafe and played backgammon and smoked the nargila the one pound fifty would have been well spent instead of being stolen by thieves. But no, he’d decided to be sensible and wise; rather than spend money on pointless games, he’d told himself, make your children happy by buying them some fruit. As for the young man with the thick glasses who was carrying books, the man with the gun told him to stop scratching the floor with his feet because it was setting his teeth on edge; he’d cut those feet off. he threatened, if it happened again. When four pounds sixty piastres had been extracted from the young man, the money collector announced that the operation was complete. ‘What about

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<td>12.</td>
<td>How did the soldier feel about the incident in the bus?</td>
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<td>13.</td>
<td>The thief did not bother to ask the soldier for his money. Why?</td>
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<td>14.</td>
<td>What was the old man’s plea to the thief?</td>
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<td>15.</td>
<td>Why did the thin black man curse himself?</td>
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<td>16.</td>
<td>What did the man with the gun tell the young man with thick glasses?</td>
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the conductor?’ asked the man with the gun. ‘We’ve done him,’ said the money collector. ‘He didn’t have much on him anyway.’ This annoyed the man with the gun. He grunted irritably. ‘We’ll take it anyway,’ he said, ‘just to get back at the government.’ He hurled some insults at the passengers and started telling them again what he’d do if anyone tried to move, but the money collector interrupted him. ‘That woman with the child’s got a goose,’ he said. ‘Shall I go and grab it?’ The man with the gun considered this for a while, but, fearing the goose might expose them with its honking, he didn’t answer his partner. Ordering the driver, instead, to open the bus doors which had stayed shut since he got on. Then he made a sign to his partners to join him. ‘Come on,’ he ordered. ‘Jump off. Quick!’

The bus sped away, and the thieves ran like the wind to a piece of waste land behind the old mosque, in a distant street parallel to the one where they’d got off. There they sat down to catch their breath, count the money and examine the articles they’d stolen – the latter consisting of three wedding rings (one of silver and two which broke between the teeth of the man with the scar on his neck, showing that they were polished brass) and five watches (two of them not working and another two at

17. The man with the gun did not prefer snatching the goose. Why?

18. What were the things looted from the passengers?
least thirty years old and not worth a thing). The combined money from the passengers and the conductor amounted to the sum of sixty-eight pounds ninety-three piastres. ‘Bastards!’ yelled the man with the gun bitterly. He was backed up by the man with the scar, whose only wish at that moment was to smash anything he could lay his hands on. Finding nothing suitable he took his shoe off and banged it on the ground. ‘Scum!’ he said. ‘God damn a country with passengers like these!’ The third man, who’d pointed his knife into the driver’s back, was struck by the force of his friends’ words. The whole situation was so ridiculous his laughter rang through the empty lot. ‘We’ll have to forget about eating kebabs or getting drunk tonight,’ he said. ‘We’ve ended up with nothing.’ He fingered his scar, as he always did when he got worked up. ‘A great, fat bus full of people,’ he went on, ‘and we come out with a lousy sixty-eight pounds! Just our luck! God, this bunch had already been robbed before we came along!’ The thin, nervous-looking man joined in his partner’s laughter. ‘The ones who robbed them must have been big thieves,’ he answered. ‘Really big thieves! It’s a big-time game they’re playing. Ha, ha, ha!’

19. ‘We’ll have to forget about eating kebabs or getting drunk tonight.’ Why did the thief say so?

20. Why did the thieves remark that the passengers had already been robbed?

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**Backgammon**; a board game for two players; pieces move according to throws of dices

**Conscript**; to make somebody join the armed forces

**Gazelle**; an antelope found in Africa

**Lousy**; very bad or worthless

**Merchandise**; goods that are bought or sold

**Nargila**; a tobacco pipe

**Piastre**; a fractional monetary unit in Egypt, Syria and Lebanon

**Stifle**; to prevent something from happening

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**Understanding the Text**

1. ‘They carried out their plan very efficiently.’ Who are the ‘they’ referred to here? What was their plan?

2. How is the theme of theft related to the game ‘Doves on the Wing’?

3. Describe the route taken by the bus. Does it contribute in any way to the social setting of the story? Comment.
4. People from different walks of life were travelling in the bus. Comment on their responses to the incident in the bus.

5. What were the attitudes of the passengers towards their possessions?

6. ‘The ones who robbed them must have been big thieves.’ Why did one of the thieves say so?

7. Attempt a character sketch of the thieves as revealed from their actions and attitude towards the passengers.

8. What does the title Doves on the Wing signify?

Writing about the Text

1. Theft is a theme handled by many authors. Do you think that Salwa Bakr has treated it in a unique manner?

2. Satire often becomes a weapon in the hands of the author while exposing the darker shades of life. Pick out instances in which dark humour and satire reveal the plight of the characters in the story.

3. The passengers do not resist the thieves from looting them. Instead, they give away their possessions. What aspect of mob psychology is revealed here? Discuss the social concerns that get highlighted in this context.

4. ‘Broken pavements’, ‘potholes’, ‘gangster film’, ‘empty wasteland’ are some of the images employed by the author to precipitate the crisis. Comment.

5. The characterisation and plot mutually support the storyline. What conclusion do you arrive at after reading the story? What do you think of the author’s point of view? Substantiate.

6. Did you notice that the story reads like a long passage, without being broken up into paragraphs? Does it have any bearing on the theme?

References


Bama (1958-)

Bama is the pen-name of Tamil Dalit novelist Bama Faustina Soosairaj. Basically from a Roman Catholic family, Bama has been hailed as the leading voice of the suppressed class of Dalits in Tamil Nadu. She came into the limelight with her autobiographical novel *Karukku* (1992) and penned two more novels, *Sangati* (1994) and *Vannam* (2002) along with two collections of short stories: *Kusumbukkaran* (1996) and *Oru Tattiyum Erumaiyum* (2003). Her critically acclaimed work *Karukku* won the Crossword Book Award in 2000. Bama's novels focus on caste and gender-based discrimination.

The story *We too are Human Beings* has been taken from *Karukku* (means palmyra leaves). It throws light on her childhood experiences especially on the caste-based discrimination that prevailed in her society.

*We too are Human Beings*

When I was studying in the third class, I hadn’t yet heard people speak openly of untouchability. But I had already seen, felt, experienced and been humiliated by what it is.

I was walking home from school one day, an old bag hanging from my shoulder. It was actually possible to walk the distance in ten minutes. But usually it would take me thirty minutes at the very least to reach home. It would take me from half an hour to an hour to dawdle along, watching all the fun and games that were going on, all the entertaining novelies and oddities in the streets, the shops and the bazaar.

The performing monkey; the snake which the snake charmer kept in its box and displayed from time to time; the cyclist who had not got off his bike for three days, and who kept pedalling as hard as he could from break of day; the rupee notes that were pinned on to his shirt to

1. Bama took more than half an hour to reach home from school. Why?
spur him on; the spinning wheels; the Maariyaata temple, the huge bell hanging there; the pongal offerings being cooked in front of the temple; the dried fish stall by the Statue of Gandhi; the sweet stall, the stall selling fried snacks, and all the other shops next to each other; the street light always demonstrating how it could change from blue to violet; the Narikkuravan hunter-gypsy with his wild lemur in cages, selling needles, clay beads and instruments for cleaning out the ears — Oh, I could go on and on. Each thing would pull me to a stand-still and not allow me to go any further.

At times, people from various political parties would arrive, put up a stage and harangue us through their mikes. Then there might be a street play, or a puppet show, or a ‘no magic, no miracle’ stunt performance. All these would happen from time to time. But almost certainly there would be some entertainment or other going on.

Even otherwise, there were the coffee clubs in the bazaar, the way each waiter cooled the coffee, lifting a tumbler high up and pouring its contents into a tumbler held in his other hand. Or the way some people sat in front of the shops chopping up onion, their eyes turned elsewhere so that they would not smart. Or the almond tree growing there and its fruit which was occasionally blown down by the wind. All these sights taken together would tether my legs and stop me from going home.

And then, according to the season, there would be mango, cucumber, sugar-cane, sweet-potato, palm-shoots, gram, palmyrup and palm-fruit, guavas and jack-fruit. Every day I would see people selling sweet and savoury fried snacks, payasam, halva, boiled tamarind seeds and iced lollies.

Gazing at all this, one day, I came to my street, my bag slung over my shoulder. At the opposite corner, though, a threshing floor had been set up, and the landlord watched the proceedings, seated

2. What were the sights that held the author from going home?
on a piece of sacking spread over a stone ledge. Our people were hard at work, driving cattle in pairs, round and round, to tread out the grain from the straw. The animals were muzzled so that they wouldn’t help themselves to the straw. I stood for a while there, watching the fun.

Just then, an elder of our street came along from the direction of the bazaar. The manner in which he was walking along made me want to double up. I wanted to shriek with laughter at the sight of such a big man carrying a small packet in that fashion. I guessed there was something like vadai or green banana bhaji in the packet, because the wrapping paper was stained with oil. He came along, holding out the packet by its string, without touching it. I stood there thinking to myself, if he holds it like that, won’t the package come undone, and the vadais fall out?

The elder went straight up to the landlord, bowed low and extended the packet towards him, cupping the hand that held the string with his other hand. The landlord opened the parcel and began to eat the vadais.

After I had watched all this, at last I went home. My elder brother was there. I told him the story in all its comic detail. I fell about with laughter at the memory of a big man, and an elder at that, making such a game out of carrying the parcel. But Annan was not amused. Annan told me the man wasn’t being funny when he carried the package like that. He said everybody believed that they were upper caste and therefore must not touch us. If they did, they would be polluted. That’s why he had to carry the package by its string.

When I heard this, I didn’t want to laugh any more, and I felt terribly sad. How could they believe that it was disgusting if one of us held that package in his hands, even though the vadai had been wrapped first in a banana leaf, and then parcelled in paper? I felt so provoked and angry that I wanted to touch those wretched vadais myself.
straight away. Why should we have to fetch and carry for these people. I wondered. Such an important elder of ours goes meekly to the shops to fetch snacks and hands them over reverently, bowing and shrinking, to this fellow who just sits there and stuffs them into his mouth. The thought of it infuriated me.

How was it that these fellows thought so much of themselves? Because they had scraped four coins together, did that mean they must lose all human feelings? But we too are human beings. Our people should never run these petty errands for these fellows. We should work in their fields, take home our wages, and leave it at that.

My elder brother, who was studying at a university, had come home for the holidays. He would often go to the library in our neighbouring village in order to borrow books. He was on his way home one day, walking along the banks of the irrigation tank. One of the landlord’s men came up behind him. He thought my Annan looked unfamiliar, and so he asked, ‘Who are you, appa, what’s your name?’ Annan told him his name. Immediately the other man asked, ‘Thambi, on which street do you live?’ The point of this was that if he knew on which street we lived, he would know our caste too.

Annan told me all these things. And he added, ‘Because we are born into this community, we are never given any honour or dignity or respect; we are stripped of all that. But if we study and make progress, we can throw away these indignities. So study with care, learn all you can. If you are always ahead in your lessons, people will come to you on their own accord and attach themselves to you. Work hard and learn.’ The words that Annan spoke to me that day made a very deep impression on me. And I studied hard, with all my breath and being, in a frenzy almost. As Annan had urged, I stood first in my class. And because of that, many people became my friends.

7. ‘The thought of it infuriated me.’
What was the thought?

8. Why did the landlord’s man ask about the street where Annan lived?

9. What reason did Annan give for not getting honour or dignity in the society?

10. What way did Annan suggest to throw away the social inequalities?
**We too are Human Beings**

**dawdle**: to take a long time to do something

**double up**: overcome with laughter

**errand**: a petty job

**barangue**: long, loud, angry speech to persuade people

**humiliate**: abuse; ill-treat

**indignity**: a situation that makes you feel embarrassed or ashamed

**infuriate**: make a person extremely angry

**Lemur**: a long tailed primate living in trees usually found in Madagascar

**Maariyata temple**: temple of goddess Mariyamman

**muzzle**: guard fitted over an animal’s nose and mouth to stop it feeding or biting

**Narikuravan**: a tribal gypsy group

**novelty**: something new and unusual

**oddity**: something that seems strange and unusual

**pongal**: a harvest festival celebrated by Tamilians

**scrape**: collect/gather

**spur**: something that encourages someone to do something

**tether**: to tie an object to a post with rope

**wretched**: (here) something of no merit

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**Understanding the Text**

1. The narrator is a keen observer of things on her way home. Describe the ‘entertaining novelties and oddities’ on her way.

2. What was the narrator’s initial reaction to the incident on the street? Did it change later on?

3. Why did the narrator feel terribly sad and provoked?

4. ‘I wanted to touch those wretched vadais…’ Were the vadais wretched? If so, why did Bama want to touch them?

5. Contrast the landlord with the people at work.

6. How did Annan justify the strange behaviour of the elder man of their community?

7. Describe the role played by Annan in the life of the narrator.

**Writing about the Text**

1. Humanity is beyond caste, creed and race. Elucidate this statement in the light of the story *We too are Human Beings*.

2. Education plays a key role in eradicating casteism and securing a respectable status for the marginalised sections in the society. Do you agree with this statement? Justify the statement in the light of the story *We Too are Human Beings*.

**References**


**Manoj Night Shyamalan (1970 - )**


**Excerpts from ‘The Sixth Sense’ (Screenplay)**

INT. SCHOOL LOBBY - LATE AFTERNOON

The rain comes down a little stronger now on the stained glass window.


**COLE**

How come we’re so quiet?

Malcolm shrugs his shoulders.

**MALCOLM**

I think we said everything we needed to say.

(beat)

May be it’s time to say things to someone else? Someone close to you?

1. Identify the location of this shot.
2. Do you find anything peculiar about writing of the names of characters?
3. Which word denotes a pause in the dialogue?
May be.
Cole keeps moving. Beat.

COLE (CONT’D)
I’m not going to see you anymore, am I?

Malcolm doesn’t respond for a while. He shakes his head.
‘No’. Beat.

MALCOLM
You were great in the play, Cole.

COLE
Really?

MALCOLM
And you know what else?

COLE
What?

MALCOLM
Tommy Tammisimo sucked big time.
Cole smiles huge. Beat. Cole’s sword drags on the tile as he continues to circle around the hall. We get the idea he doesn’t want to be still.

COLE
May be we can pretend we’re going to see each other tomorrow?

Cole glances at Malcolm.

COLE (CONT’D)
Just for pretend.
Beat. Malcolm exhales very slowly as he gets up.

MALCOLM
Okay. Cole, I’m going to go now... I’ll see you tomorrow.

4. How is the dialogue continued after a pause?

5. Why does Malcolm say ‘I’m going to go now....’?
Cole watches as Malcolm walks down the stairs to the entrance. Cole stops moving.

COLE

(soft)

See you tomorrow.

Malcolm’s face shows his losing battle against his emotions. He doesn’t turn to look back.

CUT TO:

EXT. MALCOLM’S HOUSE – NIGHT

Malcolm walks quietly down the sidewalk towards his home.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM – NIGHT

Malcolm enters the living room and smiles at what he sees.

Anna is asleep in a chair. She’s curled up in a ball. In a way, she looks like a little girl.

Their WEDDING VIDEO PLAYS SOFTLY ON THE TELEVISION.

Malcolm watches himself and Anna cutting their wedding cake. THE CROWD APPLAUDS AS THEY FEED EACH OTHER, PIECES.

Malcolm turns from the television and takes a seat next to Anna. He gazes upon his wife softly.

MALCOLM

(whispers)

Anna, I’ve been so lost.

(beat)
Excerpts from The Sixth Sense

I need my best friend.
Silence. Malcolm gazes for a beat before looking down.

ANNA

I miss you.

Malcolm’s eyes move back up. He looks at his sleeping wife. ANNA’S TALKING IN HER SLEEP.

Malcolm can’t believe it.

MALCOLM

I miss you.

Beat. Her lips move again. Eyes never open.

ANNA

Why, Malcolm?

MALCOLM


ANNA

Why did you leave me?

MALCOLM

I didn’t leave you.

Beat. She becomes silent. Anna falls back into deep sleep, her arm slides down. SOMETHING SHINY FALLS OUT AND ROLLS ON THE GROUND.

Malcolm’s eyes watch as it comes to a stop... Beat. He gazes curiously at a GOLD WEDDING BAND laying on the wood floor.

Confusion washes over his face. He looks to Anna’s hand... An identical gold wedding ring is on her finger.

Beat. Malcolm looks down at his own hand.... HIS WEDDING RING IS GONE.
Malcolm is completely lost. He takes a couple steps back. Looks around in confusion...

His eyes come to rest on the door to his basement office. He looks in disbelief at the set of DEAD BOLT LOCKS on the door.

Malcolm doesn’t know what the hell’s going on. His eyes are drawn to the dining table... Only ONE PLACE SETTING is out on the tabletop.

His eyes search again — they finally lock on the WEDDING VIDEO PLAYING. Malcolm watches images of himself on the screen... His eyes fill with a storm of emotions...

Malcolm looks to Anna’s face and becomes very still. Beat.

CLOSE ON ANNA... TILL HER SLEEPING FACE FILLS THE FRAME... IT’S NOW WE NOTICE FOR THE FIRST TIME, THAT ANNA’S BREATHS ARE FORMING TINY CLOUDS IN THE COLD AIR.

MALCOLM (CONT’D)

(like he’s falling down a deep hole)

No...

SLAM CUT.

FLASHBACK. INT. BEDROOM – NIGHT

VIOLENT GUN SHOTS RING THROUGH THE BEDROOM.

Anna rushes across the room to a crumpled Malcolm laying on the floor. Malcolm’s hands are clutched at his side.

Anna pries his hands away to reveal the tiniest tear in his shirt. Anna’s eyes catch something dark — moving... A POOL OF BLOOD IS FORMING UNDER MALCOLM. She slowly turns him over on his side... A horrific sight... An enormous exit wound on his lower back pours out blood uncontrollably.

13. What is special about the setting on the dining table?

14. Where is the end of this shot?

15. Is this shot a flashback? Explain.
Excerpts from The Sixth Sense

Malcolm’s jaw is locked open. His breaths are long and strained.

ANNA IS SCREAMING, BUT HER VOICE SOUNDS FAR AWAY.

Malcolm’s open jaw releases a long strained breath and then becomes silent. Anna tries to cover the wound with her hands desperately.

SLAM CUT.

PRESENT: INT. LIVING ROOM – NIGHT

MALCOLM

(screaming)

ANNA!

MALCOLM’S VOICE SHAKES THE ROOM.

Anna just sleeps.

Malcolm staggers back. His breathing erratic.

He takes a seat across from her. He looks at his wife and suddenly becomes very still.

Anna’s still curled up asleep, but tears are falling from her shut eyes.

Beat.

MALCOLM (CONT’D)

Don’t cry.

Anna doesn’t move, but her tears seem to fall little faster.

MALCOLM (CONT’D)

I think I have to go.

Malcolm’s mind is racing.

MALCOLM (CONT’D)

(realizing)

I just needed to do a couple of things.

Beat.
And I needed to tell you something.

ANNA

Tell me.

MALCOLM

You were never second... ever.

Malcolm gazes at his wife. Tears fall from both their eyes.

MALCOLM (CONT’D)

You sleep now, Anna. Everything will be different in the morning.

Anna lays still.

ANNA

Goodnight, Malcolm.

MALCOLM

Goodnight, sweetheart.

The room falls into silence. Malcolm sits still across from his wife. He drinks her in with his eyes.

Malcolm leans back in the chair. Slowly closes his eyes. They close shut.

WE ARE TIGHT ON ANNA... WE SEE HER SOFT BREATHS FORMING A TINY CLOUD IN THE COLD AIR...

WITH EACH BREATH, THEY BECOME LESS AND LESS VISIBLE... THE ROOM BECOMING LESS AND LESS COLD.

SOON HER BREATHS AREN’T VISIBLE AT ALL. SHE BREATHES GENTLY, FALLING BACK INTO A PEACEFUL SLEEP.

WE PULL BACK to reveal Anna alone in the living room.

THE WEDDING VIDEO PLAYS ITS LAST SCENES......

MALCOLM IS AT THE MICROPHONE ON THE DANCE
FLOOR IN FRONT OF ALL THE GUESTS. HE’S HOLDING A GLASS OF WINE.

MALCOLM (CONT’D)
(on tape)
...I think I’ve had too much to drink.

Malcolm smiles as he takes a sip. The guests chuckle as they watch. Beat.

MALCOLM (CONT’D)
(on tape)
I just have to say, this day today has been one very special day... I wish we all could stay and play.

The crowd erupts in LAUGHTER.

MALCOLM (CONT’D)
(on tape)
What?

Malcolm looks around at everyone’s smiling faces. Beat. Malcolm takes his time. He looks just past the camera.

MALCOLM (CONT’D)
Anna, I never thought I’d feel the things I’m feeling. I never thought I’d be able to stand up in front of my friends and family and tell them what’s inside me...

Today I can...

Malcolm’s eyes fill with water.

MALCOLM (CONT’D)
(softly)
Anna Crowe... I am in love. In love I am.

FADE TO BLACK.

18. For what reason do you think the action is written in capitals?

19. How do we know that this dialogue is from the video tape?
Understanding the Text

1. A screenplay makes use of abbreviations to suggest the place of action. What are the abbreviations used for actions happening outdoors and indoors? How do you know the time of the action from the screenplay?

2. Action in a screenplay follows different formatting. What type of actions do we write in capital letters? There can be pauses during action and dialogues. What difference do you find while marking pauses during an action and pauses during a dialogue?

3. A screenplay is the literary form of a film which uses visuals and sounds. How do we express different tones in dialogues? How are sounds other than dialogues written in a screenplay? What technique is used for a loud sound or a loud dialogue?

4. What do you think is the climax of the scene?

5. Which terms are used to mark the end of different shots?

Writing about the Text

1. Attempt a plot summary of this excerpt.

2. Attempt a screenplay selecting a scene from a story you have read.

3. Collect screenplays written in English and other languages and find out the difference in formatting screenplays.

References


Samuel Langhorne Clemens (1835-1910)

Samuel Langhorne Clemens, better known by his pen name Mark Twain, was an American author and humourist. He wrote *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876) and its sequel, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1885), which is often called ‘The Great American Novel’. During his tour of Europe and the Middle East, he wrote a popular collection of travel letters, which were later compiled as *The Innocents Abroad* in 1869. It was on this trip that he met his future brother-in-law, Charles Langdon. Both were passengers aboard the Quaker City on their way to the Holy Land of Jerusalem.

**In Memory of Azores**

I think the Azores must be very little known in America. Out of our whole ship’s company, there was not a solitary individual who knew anything whatever about them. Some of the party, well-read concerning most other lands, had no other information about the Azores than that they were a group of nine or ten small islands far out in the Atlantic, something more than halfway between New York and Gibraltar. That was all. These considerations move me to put in a paragraph of dry facts just here.

The community is eminently Portuguese—that is to say, it is slow, poor, shiftless, sleepy, and lazy. There is a civil governor, appointed by the King of Portugal, and also a military governor, who can assume supreme control and suspend the civil government at his pleasure. The islands contain a population of about 200,000, almost entirely Portuguese. Everything is staid and settled, for the country was one hundred years old when Columbus discovered America. The principal crop is corn, and they raise it and grind it just as their great-great-grandfathers did. They plow with a board slightly shod with iron; their trifling little harrows are drawn by men and women; small windmills grind the corn, ten bushels a day, and

1. What information do you get about Azores?

2. What is the staple crop of Azores?
In Memory of Azores

there is one assistant superintendent to feed the mill and a general superintendent to stand by and keep him from going to sleep. When the wind changes they hitch on some donkeys and actually turn the whole upper half of the mill around until the sails are in proper position. Instead of fixing the concern so that the sails could be moved instead of the mill. Oxen tread the wheat from the ear, after the fashion prevalent in the time of Methuselah. There is not a wheelbarrow in the land—they carry everything on their heads, or on donkeys, or in a wicker-bodied cart, whose wheels are solid blocks of wood and whose axles turn with the wheel. There is not a modern plow in the islands or a threshing machine. All attempts to introduce them have failed. The Portuguese crossed himself and prayed God to shield him from all blasphemous desire to know more than his father did before him. The climate is mild; they never have snow or ice, and I saw no chimneys in the town. The donkeys and the men, women, and children of a family all eat and sleep in the same room, and are unclean, are ravaged by vermin, and are truly happy. The people lie, and cheat the stranger, and are desperately ignorant, and have hardly any reverence for their dead. The latter trait shows how little better they are than the donkeys they eat and sleep with. The only well-dressed Portuguese in the camp are the half a dozen well-to-do families, the priests, and the soldiers of the little garrison.

The wages of a laborer are twenty to twenty-four cents a day, and those of a good mechanic about twice as much. They count it in reis at a thousand to the dollar, and this makes them rich and contented. Fine grapes used to grow in the islands, and an excellent wine was made and exported. But a disease killed all the vines fifteen years ago, and since that time no wine has been made. The islands being wholly of volcanic origin, the soil is necessarily very rich. Nearly every foot of ground is under cultivation, and two or three crops a year of each article

3. Why don't you find a modern plow or a threshing machine in Azores?

4. The people in Azores are not better than the donkeys they eat and sleep with. Do you agree? Explain.

5. What makes the people rich and contented?
are produced, but nothing is exported save a few oranges—chiefly to England. Nobody comes here, and nobody goes away. News is a thing unknown in Fayal. A thirst for it is a passion equally unknown. A Portuguese of average intelligence inquired if our civil war was over. Because, he said, somebody had told him it was—or at least it ran in his mind that somebody had told him something like that! And when a passenger gave an officer of the garrison copies of the Tribune, the Herald, and Times, he was surprised to find later news in them from Lisbon than he had just received by the little monthly steamer. He was told that it came by cable. He said he knew they had tried to lay a cable ten years ago, but it had been in his mind somehow that they hadn’t succeeded!

We visited a Jesuit cathedral nearly two hundred years old. In a chapel of the cathedral is an altar with facings of solid silver—at least they call it so, and I think myself it would go a couple of hundred to the ton (to speak after the fashion of the silver miners)—and before it is kept forever burning a small lamp. A devout lady who died, left money and contracted for unlimited masses for the repose of her soul, and also stipulated that this lamp should be kept lighted always, day and night. She did all this before she died, you understand. It is a very small lamp and a very dim one, and it could not work her much damage. I think, if it went out altogether. The great altar of the cathedral and also three or four minor ones are a perfect mass of gilt gimcrack and gingerbread.

The walls of the chancel are of porcelain, all pictured over with figures of almost life size, very elegantly wrought and dressed in the fanciful costumes of two centuries ago. The design was a history of something or somebody, but none of us were learned enough to read the story. The old father, reposing under a stone close by, dated 1686, might have told us if he could have risen. But he didn’t.
As we came down through the town we encountered a squad of little donkeys ready saddled for use. The saddles were peculiar, to say the least. They consisted of a sort of saw-buck with a small mattress on it, and this furniture covered about half the donkey. There were no stirrups, but really such supports were not needed—to use such a saddle was the next thing to riding a dinner table—there was ample support clear out to one's knee joints. A pack of ragged Portuguese muleteers crowded around us, offering their beasts at half a dollar an hour—more rascality to the stranger, for the market price is sixteen cents. Half a dozen of us mounted the ungainly affairs and submitted to the indignity of making a ridiculous spectacle of ourselves through the principal streets of a town of 10,000 inhabitants.

We started. It was not a trot, a gallop, or a canter, but a stampede, and made up of all possible or conceivable gaits. No spurs were necessary. There was a muleteer to every donkey and a dozen volunteers beside, and they banged the donkeys with their goad sticks, and pricked them with their spikes, and shouted something that sounded like "Sekki-yah!" and kept up a din and a racket that was worse than Bedlam itself. These rascals were all on foot, but no matter, they were always up to time—they can outrun and outlast a donkey. Altogether, ours was a lively and a picturesque procession, and drew crowded audiences to the balconies wherever we went.

Blucher could do nothing at all with his donkey. The beast scampered zigzag across the road and the others ran into him; he scraped Blucher against carts and the corners of houses; the road was fenced in with high stone walls; and the donkey gave him a polishing first on one side and then on the other. But never once took the middle; he finally came to the house he was born in and darted into the parlor, scraping Blucher off at the doorway. After remounting, Blucher said to the muleteer, "Now, that's enough, you know; you go slow hereafter."

9. What is the 'ridiculous spectacle' referred to here?

10. Why does the author refer to their procession, 'worse than Bedlam'?

11. Do you think Blucher had a comfortable trip? Why?
But the fellow knew no English and did not understand, so he simply said, "Sekki-yah!" and the donkey was off again like a shot. He turned a corner suddenly, and Blucher went over his head. And, to speak truly, every mule stumbled over the two, and the whole cavalcade was piled up in a heap. No harm done. A fall from one of those donkeys is of little more consequence than rolling off a sofa. The donkeys all stood still after the catastrophe and waited for their dismembered saddles to be patched up and put on by the noisy muleteers. Blucher was pretty angry and wanted to swear, but every time he opened his mouth his animal did so also and let off a series of brays that drowned all other sounds.

It was fun, scurrying around the breezy hills and through the beautiful canyons. There was that rare thing, novelty, about it; it was a fresh, new, exhilarating sensation, this donkey riding, and worth a hundred worn and threadbare home pleasures. The roads were a wonder, and well they might be. Here was an island with only a handful of people in it 25,000—and yet such fine roads do not exist in the United States outside of Central Park. Everywhere you go, in any direction, you find either a hard, smooth, level thoroughfare, just sprinkled with black lava sand, and bordered with little gutters neatly paved with small smooth pebbles, or compactly paved ones like Broadway. They talk much of the Russ pavement in New York, and call it a new invention—yet here they have been using it in this remote little isle of the sea for two hundred years! Every street in Horta is handsomely paved with the heavy Russ blocks, and the surface is neat and true as a floor—not marred by holes like Broadway. And every road is fenced in by tall, solid lava walls, which will last a thousand years in this land where frost is unknown. They are very thick, and are often plastered and whitewashed and capped with projecting slabs of cut stone. Trees from gardens above hang their swaying tendrils down, and contrast their bright green with the

12. What is the funny incident of donkey riding that the author narrates?

13. What makes the author comment about the Russ pavement in New York?
whitewash or the black lava of the walls and make them beautiful. The trees and vines stretch across these narrow roadways sometimes and so shut out the sun that you seem to be riding through a tunnel. The pavements, the roads, and the bridges are all government work.

The bridges are of a single span—a single arch—of cut stone, without a support, and paved on top with flags of lava and ornamental pebble work. Everywhere are walls, walls, walls, and all of them tasteful and handsome—and eternally substantial; and everywhere are those marvelous pavements, so neat, so smooth, and so indestructible. And if ever roads and streets and the outsides of houses were perfectly free from any sign or semblance of dirt or dust or mud, or uncleanliness of any kind, it is Horta. The lower classes of the people, in their persons and their domiciles, are not clean—but there it stops—the town and the island are miracles of cleanliness.

We arrived home again finally, after a ten-mile excursion, and the irrepressible muleteers scampered at our heels through the main street, goading the donkeys, shouting the everlasting “Sekki—yah.” and singing “John Brown’s Body” in ruinous English.

When we were dismounted and it came to settling, the shouting and jawing and swearing and quarreling among the muleteers and with us was nearly deafening. One fellow would demand a dollar an hour for the use of his donkey; another claimed half a dollar for pricking him up, another a quarter for helping in that service, and about fourteen guides presented bills for showing us the way through the town and its environs; and every vagrant of them was more vociferous, and more vehement and more frantic in gesture than his neighbor. We paid one guide and paid for one muleteer to each donkey.

The mountains on some of the islands are very high. We
sailed along the shore of the island of Pico, under a stately green pyramid that rose up with one unbroken sweep from our very feet to an altitude of 7,613 feet, and thrust its summit above the white clouds like an island adrift in a fog!

We got plenty of fresh oranges, lemons, figs, apricots, etc., in these Azores, of course. But I will desist. I am not here to write Patent Office reports.

We are on our way to Gibraltar, and shall reach there five or six days out from the Azores.

15. What gives the island of Pico an impression that it is adrift in a fog?

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**blaspemey**: behaviour or language that insults or shows a lack of respect for God or religion

**canter**: a movement of a horse at a speed that is fairly fast but not very fast

**gait**: manner of walking

**garrison**: a group of soldiers living in a town or fort to defend it

**gimcracks**: badly made and of little value

**muleteer**: a person who controls mules

**ravage**: destroy

**Reis**: obsolete Portuguese money

**scampers**: to walk unsteadily

**scurry**: to run with quick, short steps

**shiftless**: inefficient

**solitary**: alone

**staid**: boring and old-fashioned

**stamped**: a sudden rush of a panic-stricken herd

**stipulate**: to demand or specify

**stirrups**: the metal rings that hang down on each side of a horse's saddle, used to support the rider's foot

**threadbare**: something that is old and thin because it has been thoroughly used

**thrust**: to beat out

**trifle**: silly

**vagrant**: a person who has no home or job, especially one who begs

**vermin**: troublesome animals that threaten human society by spreading diseases or destroying crops

**vociferous**: expressing your opinions or feelings in a loud and confident manner

**wrought**: shaped by tools
Understanding the Text

1. Do you think that Mark Twain is being dispassionate and balanced in his assessment of the inhabitants of Azores? Why?

2. A travelogue contains a description of the people of a locality and their culture. What details of the life and culture of the people of Azores can you find in this travelogue?

3. Anecdotes make a travelogue interesting to readers. How does Mark Twain use anecdotes in his travelogue?

4. Descriptions of the scenic beauty of places enrich a travelogue. What details of scenic beauty and places make this travelogue interesting?

Writing about the Text

1. Consider *In Memory of Azores* as a travelogue. How does the author present the details of the people, places, scenic beauty and the culture of Azores in his narration?

2. Mark Twain’s works are celebrated for their touch of humour. Find instances of Twain’s humour in the text. What other features do you think make him a popular writer. Comment on the literary style of the writer based on your reading of *In Memory of Azores*.

3. Did you notice the difference in the spelling of words like ‘laborer’, ‘quarreling’, ‘marvelous’, ‘neighbor’, etc.? How can we account for it?

   In British and American English, the same words are often spelt differently. Find such examples from the text.

   There is a remarkable difference in vocabulary too. The word ‘pavement’ which occurs in the text is a typical American usage for what we call ‘footpath’. Likewise, for an American, a ‘lift’ is an ‘elevator’, a ‘car’ is an ‘automobile’ and ‘petrol’ is ‘gasoline’. Find out more such word pairs referring to a dictionary.

References

